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LOOK WHO'S GOING TO GENERAL SYNOD!

Virginia "Ginny" Nixon

Conference Moderator Virginia "Ginny" Nixon grew up in Oregon, but more recently has lived primarily in Alabama and Tennessee. She has been a wife, full-time mom, a teacher, a lobbyist, a computer programmer, and is now happily retired in Pleasant Hill, TN. She attended Sunday school in a Congregational Church and has been UCC ever since. She has been a lay leader in a variety of roles, and she has enjoyed and been enriched by the TAP program and by participating in the first Global Immersion trip to Thailand in 2008. She is married and has four children, four grandchildren, and one great grandchild.



As Conference Moderator Ginny works with the Conference Minister to organize and preside over Annual Meeting, Board of Directors, and other meetings of the lay leadership of the Conference. She is very proud that she was elected to serve as Moderator and represent our conference.

Tim Downs

Local Church Ministries (Representing the Council of Conference Ministers) is completing his term on the Board of Local Church Ministries where he represents the Southern Region of the Council of Conference Ministers.

Dorinda Broadnax

Dorinda is the Past Director of Christian Education at Community Congregational in Montgomery, AL, and she served as Associate Pastor of her church. In addition to her work at the local level, Dorinda is the Southeast Conference representative on the Executive Council of the UCC where she serves on the Coordinating Committee and as co-chair of the Evaluation, Policy and Planning Committee. In this role, she also participates actively on the Board of the Southeast Conference. She is also an active leader in the Alabama Tennessee Association of the Southeast Conference. She faithfully served as Secretary to the Association's Executive Board and presently serves as Vice-Moderator.

Dorinda was an outstanding participant in the Theology Among the People leadership development program of the Southeast Conference. This program offers ten courses of eight sessions each, requiring three to four years to complete. The rigorous curriculum covers a wide range of Biblical and theological study and provides

UCC News

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Headlines from the United Church of Christ

[New report examines impact of recession on congregational vitality](#)

The 2008 recession extended a decade-long erosion of the financial health of American congregations, with just 14 percent of the 11,077 randomly sampled congregations saying in 2010 that their financial health is excellent.



introductory training in many types of ministry. Dorinda has built on this foundation to provide leadership not only in our denomination but also in our partner Disciples of Christ denomination. She participates in the Christian Church Disciples of Christ Mentoring Ministry in Montgomery, and she has served as Interim Minister for the Village Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Auburn, Alabama. She is the only licensed minister in the denomination to serve in these capacities.

Dorinda has been employed with the Law Offices of Davis & Hatcher for the past eighteen (18) years. Recently she was employed as a "Recruiter Specialist" for BTL Technologies, Inc., a San Antonio, Texas based business. She is the proud mother of three children: a lovely daughter, Shantora; two sons, Willie, Jr., and Richard; daughter-in-law, Dawn and son-in-law, Alton. She has five wonderful grandchildren – Semaj, Erika, Destiny, Richard, Jr., and Andrew Kaleb.

Marcia Bentley

Marcia of Birmingham, Alabama, is the Southeast Conference's representative on the Wider Church Ministries Board. WCM supports congregations and the other settings of the church in developing relationships with a wider church that is global, multiracial and multicultural, open and affirming, and accessible to all. This Board acts in partnership with the Division of Overseas Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Common Global Ministries – the worldwide mission program of both denominations to provide spiritual and economic support to missions in countries across the globe.

As a member of the WCM Board, Marcia serves on the Volunteer Ministries Program Committee, which provides volunteer opportunities for individuals, groups, and events at national UCC meetings, as well as the Organizational Life Committee, which plans worship for WCM Board meetings.

A life-long member of First Congregational UCC in Birmingham, she serves as a deaconess, choir member, Sunday school teacher, brochure designer, publicist, and "whatever else they think of for her to do."

A 2003 graduate of the Conference's Theology Among the People (TAP) program, Marcia has brought the Sunday message at her own church as well as Beloved Community and First Congregational in Talladega. Her love for TAP has made her an enthusiastic representative for the Conference's Transforming Churches/Transforming Lives Capital Campaign

Outside of church activities, Marcia is a Program Specialist and trainer with the Alabama Department of Human Resources' JOBS Program. She is the mother of Karri, 31, and Daniel, 25.

John Gill

John is senior pastor of Church of the Savior in Knoxville, TN, is the Southeast Conference's representative to the Board of Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM). JWM is a Covenanted Ministry of the UCC dedicated to promoting a "just, compassionate and peaceful world" for all people and all creation. Although this is undoubtedly the work of the whole church, JWM is charged with overseeing and implementing the varied ministries of the UCC that reflect this commitment. Very often, when social justice resolutions are passed at General Synod, it is the national staff of JWM that is expected to carry them out. Working in conjunction with Executive Minister Rev. Linda Jaramillo and the national staff of JWM, the JWM Board guides and supports the work of Justice and Witness Ministry "to speak and act prophetically through community mobilization, leadership training, issues education, public witness, and public policy advocacy." The work of JWM spans everything from economic and racial justice to peace, environmental issues and the civil rights of voters, prisoners, women, GLBT folks, and victims of injustice around the world. JWM staff are based in Cleveland, OH, Washington, DC, the Franklinton Center in Bricks, NC and Centro Romero on the Mexican border, but can be found at work in every conference of the UCC. For more info. go to www.ucc.org/justice/ or better yet. sign-up for UCC's Justice

and Peace Action Network also found at the website

In addition to national and regional board meetings, John helps to promote the Neighbors In Need Offering which supports the important social justice work of JWM. His term will end at this summer's General Synod Meeting, but he already looks forward to staying involved in the work of JWM.

Bette Graves Thomas

Bette is a member of First Congregational Church, UCC in Atlanta, where she is also employed as the church administrator. She is actively involved in most of the ministries, boards and auxiliaries of the church. A child of the church, Bette was christened at Faith Congregational Church in Hartford, CT and confirmed at First Congregational in Atlanta. This will be the second time she has served as a delegate to General Synod. Bette was a member of the Planning Committee of General Synod in 2005 in Atlanta. She is also a member of the Office Support Staff Network of the United Church of Christ. She currently serves as secretary of the Board of Directors of the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ and has served as treasurer of the Georgia/South Carolina Association. She was the first Chairperson of the Diaconate at First Congregational Church and was an Honored Lay Woman at the General Synod in 2005.

Bette is the mother of three adult children and 9 grandchildren, soon to be 10. She enjoys traveling, reading, cooking and catering and is looking forwards to Tampa in July.

Jennifer Spears

Jennifer has been a member of Garden of Grace UCC in Columbia, S.C., since 2005. In that time, she has served the congregation in many capacities, including twice as a lay delegate, a full term as a church trustee, a member of the sexton's crew for the facility, and in the choir.

Jennifer has attended two General Synods, in 2007 and 2009, and also the National Youth Event in 2008 in Knoxville, Tenn. She has given two workshops on transgender issues, at NYE 2008 and Synod 2009.

She currently serves as the local congregation's lay delegate and as an assistant to the pastor during Sunday services, being involved in Scripture readings, assisting with communion and prayers, and giving sermons on occasion. She has been in Member In Discernment with Garden of Grace since May 2009 and with the Georgia-South Carolina Association since January 2010. Jennifer will graduate from the TAP program in August 2011.

Professionally, Jennifer is a newspaper journalist. She has served with the Orangeburg, S.C., newspaper since 1978 in numerous capacities, and is currently a senior copy editor/designer. Her work has garnered awards for design and writing on every level, locally, regionally, and nationally.

These are just some of the leader of the Southeast Conference travelling to General Synod, we hope to introduce more of them in upcoming newsletters.

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A Word From Tim Downs - March	Southeast Conference UCC (SEC)
Lifting Up... March	UCC History and Polity
Celebrations March 2011	Southeast Conference Campaign
Conference News - March	Steps to Planting a New Church
Festival Focus - March 2011	General Synod 2011

[Feature Focus - March 2011](#)

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EVENTS CALENDAR

« < April 2011 > »						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

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